DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 068 837 AC 012 985

AUTHOR Lewinski, Austin J.
TITLE Continuing Education for Adult Learners in Empire State College.
PUB DATE May 72
NOTE 8p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Adult Education Programs; *Adult Learning; *Adult Students; *Colleges; Educational Objectives; Educational Programs; Educational Technology; Instructional Materials; Middle Aged; Older Adults; Publications; Research Proposals; Small Group Instruction; Tutoring; Young Adults
IDENTIFIERS Empire State College

ABSTRACT

Empire State College is envisioned as an institution capable of providing new approaches for adult students. The establishment of an adult learning center as a bridge for older students who wish to re-enter Empire State College is discussed. Empire State should maintain an orientation toward material that is educationally relevant to the adult student. The use of tutorial and small group discussion techniques is encouraged. Returning students should be acquainted with new educational technologies in order to formulate their own objectives. (RS)

ED 068837

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR ADULT LEARNERS IN EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

Austin J. Lewinski
May 1972

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

AC012 985

INTRODUCTION.

In creating Empire State College, the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York responded "to the urgent need to provide new and more flexible approaches to education for New York State." (Empire State College Bulletin, p.5) By directing adults, young and old, towards a realistic approach to an Associate or Baccalaureate degree, a significant step has been taken in continuing education for adults.

To a certain extent Empire State College is simply another dimension of the State University of New York. "It adds one more alternative to the diverse choices already open to the high school graduate who wants further education... ." (ESC Bulletin,p.17) However, from the point of view of adult education, the Board of Trustees has created an alternate route, not only for well-educated youth today, but also for adults in various stages of development, who now have an entry point to our colleges and universities, that were virtually closed to their generation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

"Higher education is now prejudiced against older students. They should be welcomed instead. Too often they are looked upon as inferior." (The Carnegie Commission, 1971,p.19) For two reasons it is unlikely that mature adults, especially from south central New York, will benefit from the present program for some time. First, because to the author's knowledge, no adult Center has been assigned to this region, and secondly, because adults who have been away from schooling for ten or more years, and are most likely to profit from Empire State College, would not be able to accept the challenge of the "new and complicated task" expected of them unless they have special preparation. "Youths of today, without further education can become socially and economically obsolete men and women tomorrow". (Leagans, 1971, p.263) This is especially true of adults who do not possess a realistic philosophy of change.

RATIONALE FOR ADULT LEARNING CENTERS.

In order to bridge the gap between adult everyday educational problems, and higher educational insti-

tutions such as Cornell University, Corning Community College, and Tompkins-Cortland Community College, the Empire State College will operate through a network of regional Learning Centers located within reasonable commuting distance of most New York State residents". (ESC Bulletin,p.33) This is the state's response to a situation documented by Dr. Leagans in 1966:

> "The land-grant university is increasingly viewed as a knowledge Center that can no longer limit itself to those able to participate in learning on campus, in laboratories, in experiment stations, or in extension education confined to the traditional subject matter areas of agriculture and home economics. Hence, the nature of this new role encompasses the idea of expanded use of accumulated knowledge in the solution to economic, social, aesthetic, and perhaps political problems confronting various people throughout a state". (Leagans,1966,p.8)

The new and complicated task of bridging the gap between higher educational resources and the problems of the people of New York State consists of, 1) orientation, 2) program planning, 3) contract, 4) developing learning situations and 5) evaluation. After examining inventories of persons, places and programs, a prospective student completes a formal application which may lead to his admission to the Center. At a regularly scheduled workshop, the adult will learn to define his behavioral objectives with desired precision. At an appointed time a Mentor helps the student lay out his program and resulting contract.

"The contract not only specifies activities and responsibilities of the student - it does the same for the Mentor. It must, therefore, be drawn to take account of the realities which characterize both parties. The areas of competence and readiness must be appraised for the Mentor just as for the student." (ESC Bulletin, p.36)

Contracts are then reviewed by the Faculty of the local Learning Center and the Coordinating Center at Saratoga. The time dimension of a contract is especially important. Deadlines, target dates, and time frameworks may involve half time or full time work. Ordinarily, contracts lead up to program approval for AA or BA degrees. Two conditions must be satisfied:

"1. When six to nine months of full-time study or the equivalent period of half-time study, remain to complete the AA degree program, or when twelve to eighteen months of full-time study or its equivalent remain for the BA degree.

2. When the major elements of the work remaining to be done can be described with reasonable clarity and convictions." (ESC handout, p.4,1972)

Before the student's final contract, a Review Committee, consisting of the Dean, Mentor, a Faculty member chosen by the Dean, and another chosen by the student, clarify what remains to be done. When the final contract is successfully completed, the Learning Center Faculty notifies the Coordinating Center. "At that time, student's are recommended to the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, which is empowered to award the degree." (Ibid.,p.6)

Hopefully, the above rationale will build "bridges between the needs of our adult clientele and the resources of the academic community...". (Miller,p.151)

SOME DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM.

Before the many educationally disadvantaged adults of south central New York recognize and accept the challenge of Empire State College, they will need a centrally located facility. Also, the suggested orientation workshop and short evaluation contract will have to be expanded into at least two 2-week sessions. Finally, a definite technology of objectives which clearly defines acceptable criterion should be developed. In this way, specific behavioral outcomes, determined by the Mentor, student, Dean, and Board of Review can be effectively evaluated in accordance with the student's program of studies and prior experience.

Centrally Located Learning Center For South Central New York.

At Watkins Glen, in centrally located Schuyler County, there is available a suitable educational facility which was formerly used as a Cornell student residency and then as a Prep school. This strategically located Learning Center should be the Empire State College's re-

sponse to the expanding role of higher learning in south central New York. It will provide an entry point for our older adults to the surrounding colleges and universities.

Expanded Workshop On Change And Development.

State University motto reflects the philosophy of Empire State College. "Let each become all that he is capable of being." Some basic goals of this intent as expressed by Empire State College include, 1) becoming autonomous, 2) clarifying individual purposes, 3) increased awareness, 4) understanding self, 5) understanding others, 6) developing competence and 7) developing integrity. These goals in the context of change - of moving from the status quo to what should be - form a needed frame of reference. Without it, most adults who want to change but not be changed, may become dissatisfied with the colleges inability to help meet their needs. Empire State College is not a piecemeal reform, but rather an intensive orientation towards what is educationally relevant to the individual. (ESC Bulletin,p.18)

Expanded Workshop On Communication Technology.

Another priority of the Empire State College's contribution to higher education for older students must be that of acquainting the learner with emerging educational technologies. By promoting a twofold thrust in tutorial technology and effective group participation it will help provide adults with the necessary tools to involve themselves creatively in the changing beliefs and values of an evolving society. Besides discovering and utilizing independent study practises such as employed in the use of learning modules at Cornell, T-C 3, etc., the learner should be encouraged to communicate his experiences to others by creating modules in his own interest area. Furthermore, by observing, practising, and experiencing synergetic effort in small groups, he will acquire effective group techniques practised in business, industry, government, and higher education.

> "Small group learning, like independent study, is a high involvment type learning. In combination with independent study, the two techniques are unbeatable." (Brown,1969,p.127)

A program similar to Empire State College is that of University Without Walls. This consortium of 18 Institutions has "joined together to foster research and experimentation in higher education." (Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities,1970,p.2) It is

also in its first year of experimentation. The emphasis, that I believe should be placed on internalizing an operational philosophy of change (general intent), and updating communication technology (means to our intent), has a parallel in the University Without Walls, two 2 week seminars in "Learning Skills" and "Self and Others". Also, a considerable number of community colleges that are concerned with the marginal student devotes considerable time to orientating students towards the general goals and means to higher self realization. (Moore, 1970,p.168-219)

Towards A Technology Of Objectives.

Objectives in education have become more precise as various instructional technologies emerge. Mager, Bloom, Krathwohl, and others on the national scene, and educators at Cornell University such as Leagans, Glock, Durfee, Novak, and Bruce, have developed further insights into behavioral objectives as a tool (technology) in education, management, evaluation, and audio-tutorial modules. Empire State College should work toward a clear and uniform technology of objectives which all Students, Deans, Mentors and Review Committees will adopt. This prescription becomes more significant when adult learners seek to form and evaluate their own objectives in the light of their changing needs and communication efforts. In this connection "testing procedures will need to be greatly improved to insure that advancement on the basis of experience meets all the essential requirements of advancement on the basis of degrees." (The Carnegie Commission On Higher Education, Jan.1971)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EFFORTS AT IMPROVING COLLEGES IN 1971,

Further suggestions by the Commission on Non-Traditional Studies, The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, as well as the practises of Union For Experimenting Colleges and Universities; Governors State University, near Chicago; Evergreen State College, near Olympia, Washington; will help support this new thrust in adult education that is inherent in New York's innovative Empire State College. The advice of the above Commissions and the restructuring of the above Institutions of higher education, all founded in 1971, seeks to set totally new directions for adult students of the future.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

In 1971 the Trustees of New York State constructed a new institutional form capable of bridging "the needs of our adult clientele and the resources of the academic community." (Miller,1964,p.151) Empire State College will hopefully include South Central New York as one of its twenty projected Learning Centers for consideration by 1973. A previously operated Cornell residency at Watkins Glen provides an excellent centrally located facility.

Aside from attracting high school graduates from the area, emphasis should be placed on accepting older adults. These persons will require extensive consideration of: 1) a philosophy of change and development, 2) tutorial and small group instructional communication and, 3) a technology of objectives. It is suggested also that Empire State College develop a uniform and generally acceptable tool for structuring and evaluating objectives so as to insure advancement on the basis of experience.

The two Commissions of higher education, the 18 colleges of University Without Walls, and several new non-traditional colleges founded in 1971 clearly indicate a new direction in adult education not only for the "college age" adult but for the vast older-adult workforce. This workforce includes the many forward-looking adults who are effecting present institutional changes in education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, Dr. B. Frank, Education By Appointment, Parker Publishing Co., Inc., West Nyack, N.Y., c1968.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, "Less Time, More Options", January 1971.

"Empire State College Bulletin", 1971-72, The Non-Residential College of State University of New York.

Miller, Harry L., Teaching and Learning in Adult Education, Macmillan Company, New York, 1964.

Leagans, J. Paul, "Continuing Education - A Fourth Dimension", Chapter 8., Class handout, Fall 1971.

Leagans, J. Paul, "Projections of Extension-Adult Education into the Next Decade", Department of Education, Division of Extension-Adult Education, Cornell University, November 1966.

Moore, William, Jr., Against The Odds, Jossey-Bass, Inc., San Francisco, Cal., 1970.

Commission On Non-Traditional Study,"New Dimensions For The Learner," September, 1971.

Union for Experimenting Colleges & Universities, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.,"University Without Walls", April, 1970.

ERIC Clearinghouse

NOV 3 0 1972

on Adult Education